Leo Strauss

Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*

Two sessions of a course offered in the spring quarter, 1962

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Introduction

Leo Strauss led seminars at Chicago on Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* in 1959, on *Beyond Good and Evil* in 1962, on a combination of *Zarathustra, Beyond* and *Genealogy of Morals* in 1967 and at St. John's Annapolis on *Beyond* in 1971-72. Recordings of only two sessions were made, or remain, from the 1962 course. The two sessions cover Strauss's introduction to the course and his discussion of *Beyond*'s preface and first chapter, "The Prejudices of Philosophers."

Session 1: no date

Leo Strauss: . . . the beginning of number 6. Nietzsche divides his works into shorter sections which we call "aphorisms." So aphorism 6, the beginning. Please, whoever has it reads it; no ceremony.

Student: "It has gradually become clear to me . . . "What morality do they (or does he) aim at?'"

LS: Let us stop here. So this is the principle, of course, which must be applied to Nietzsche himself: At which morality does he aim? In a later aphorism, number 211, which we cannot read now, he uses the expression, "the moral (the political)." So we can as well say: At what politics does he aim? Let us therefore apply this question to Nietzsche himself. For this purpose it is necessary to take a somewhat broader view, to see the background of politics in Nietzsche's time, or in our time. Now we can say that the political is that kind of controversial which as such affects everyone to his knowledge. Intellectual controversies, artistic controversies, religious controversies may affect everyone, but they do not necessarily affect everyone to his knowledge. This is the peculiar massiveness of political things, that they affect everyone to his knowledge.

Now the political controversy today, here, is indicated by the opposition of liberals and conservatives. Their antagonism doubtless exists, because they exchange controversies, epithets all the time. But the issue itself is not clear. Why? One of the most conservative groups in this country is called the Daughters of the American Revolution. Conservative—Revolution. I draw the conclusion that we must turn to Europe if we want to understand the issue [of] conservatives and liberals. After all, the very terms are of European origin; they emerge in the '20s of the last century, first in Spain, then they migrate to France, and then they become generally known. What did they mean in their origin, around the 1820s in the countries of their origin? The Conservatives were guided by the principle "throne and altar"; they defended privilege and inequality. The Liberals took the side of parliament and business, economics; and the principle was: no privilege, but equality. Here the issue was very clear. Yet in order to understand it a bit better, we must not forget the fact that this continental opposition was of British origin: the Tories and the Whigs were the ancestors of the Conservatives and the Liberals. We must go back to the struggle between the Stuarts and the Parliament in 1640, following, and in 1688 to understand better.

Now what was the situation here? The King and the Church of England on the one side; and the Parliament and the Chapel on the other. But after the Royalist rebellion in 1688, there was also another line-up: Parliament and the Bank of England. That you have here both the Chapel and the Bank of England on the Whiggish side is of importance, and that was of course the trouble of Max Weber, this relation between the Dissenters and the moneyed interests. The distinction between the landed and the moneyed interests as it became to be understood in England is at the bottom of this whole cleavage.

Now in the European continent in the nineteenth century, this liberalism took very extreme forms. It was not only liberal in the sense in which, say, John Locke could be said to have been

liberal, but it became radical; and this radicalism showed itself in one fact: a political atheism emerged. Political atheism was a novel thing. Atheism was as old as the hills, but political atheism was a very novel thing. There is a statement of Edmund Burke about this subject in one of the writings regarding the French Revolution, where he points that out very clearly. You will see why these seemingly disconnected facts are essential for the understanding of Nietzsche.

Now in this great contest between conservatism and liberalism in the nineteenth century, liberalism as defined proved to be stronger. The conservatives had to become democratic in order to maintain themselves: "Tory democracy" is a characteristic slogan. Of all the men who thought about these matters, one of the most famous, rightly famous, is Tocqueville, the author of *Democracy in America* and the *Ancien régime*. Tocqueville balances very carefully the pro and con between the ancient regime, that for which the conservatives were hankering somehow, and the modern regime; between the old aristocracy and the modern democracy. Tocqueville decides in favor of democracy, primarily because modern democracy has history on its side; it also has Providence on its side. The only question is: What kind of democracy? A liberal or a free democracy, meaning with proper guarantee for the minorities, or a despotic, simply majoritarian democracy? He is of course in favor of free democracy, and he demands that the aristocrats, the adherents of the values of the ancient regime must embrace democracy in order to save democracy from its very dangerous proclivities. Freedom and virtue now demand democracy, as Tocqueville sees it. He makes another point which will be important: he traces the origin of democracy, or of the tendency toward universal equality and he traces that to Christianity.

Tocqueville, however, proved to be somehow insufficient: one only has to read his work in order to see that he underestimated the problem caused by the working class; hence he underestimated the attractiveness which socialism and communism had and would have. The solution seemed, therefore, insufficient and this found very massive practical expression. One of the most successful statesmen of the nineteenth century was Bismarck, and Bismarck reached the conclusion that liberalism—not in the present-day American sense but, say, in the mid-nineteenth century sense—is inevitably the preparer of socialism. Liberalism (old fashioned, still based on a considerable property qualification) will inevitably lead to democracy (no property qualification) and this will lead eventually to socialism and communism. Therefore there is needed repression, reaction because of the inherent power of this modern movement. But the question was, and this was answered very soon: Will this repression be sufficient? Bismarck was prevented by the Emperor William II to prepare that repression which he thought indispensable. The conservatives became generals without soldiers: they had no mass support. Their mass support was the peasantry, but the peasantry became ever weaker, even numerically, than the industrial workers.

So the situation seemed to be this for the most watchful thinkers in the '70s or '80s: either communism or a much more radical kind of conservatism, much more radical than even that of Bismarck's. This could be defined in this connection with the older form of conservatism, because it was concerned with aristocracy; it was also anti-egalitarian, but if the root of egalitarianism is not some accident of the nineteenth century but Christianity itself, then the radical conservatism had to become anti-Christian and atheistic. What was preparing itself at this time was then something unheard of before: a political atheism of the *right*. This, I think, is what

fascism primarily means, whatever the lip services paid by men like Mussolini and Hitler might mean. Now from a purely political point of view we can say that Nietzsche comes to sight first as the originator of the political atheism of the right; and I believe you will not find another one who is comparable in any way to Nietzsche in power, in stature, who would deserve this title, however dubious.

We have then here a simple schema, which I will indicate by M, meaning Marx; and Nietzsche; and liberal democracy somewhere in between—a state of affairs which everyone who has been alive prior to 1945 will remember. Now Marx and Nietzsche have of course very much in common: the atheism, the radical break with the biblical tradition; secondly, the globalism. Both have broken with the national state, in different ways, indeed. In Marx the break with the national state means, is expressed by this formula: proletarians of all countries unite. This international community of the proletariat supersedes the national state. For Nietzsche a new European nobility must rule the planet. The planetary character is common to both; but still in Nietzsche the emphasis on Europe seems to be narrower than the Marxist proletarian of all countries. But this is deception. According to the conception of Marx himself, as distinguished from Khrushchev perhaps, Marx meant that there would be a leadership of the European proletariat, also American proletariat. So the two solutions are not so very much different: under the leadership of the European either proletariat or a new European nobility, planetary rule; rejection by both of liberal democracy, of parliamentarian constitutional democracy. And this liberal democracy becomes now the conservative position. I believe you will not understand the present situation in this country if you do not keep this in mind, that all, even the liberals today are measured by the true basic issue, conservatism—and that is not necessarily a title of blame, unless you know by some a priori certainty that you have to be, you must not be conservative under any condition.

Now what is the difference between Marx and Nietzsche? Marx, as you know, believed that the fundamental phenomenon is the economic; and this is not entirely Marx's own conceit, because liberal democracy itself, and precisely among the more conservative representatives of liberal democracy, calls itself "the free enterprise." Now free enterprise obviously refers to an economic system, if I am not entirely mistaken. So there is something in common here between Marx and liberal democracy. But precisely because this economic element is pre-Marxian and played such an enormous role in molding modern society, Marx could develop a strategy and a tactics of a very specific kind, much more specific than Nietzsche's strategy and tactics. To use these very vague words, Marx is much more realistic than Nietzsche, because he has the starting point for action at every place, at least in his time. You must not forget, Marx lived prior to Ford, to the Fordian revolution—you know, to the radical change of the character of capitalism brought about in our century. This is why communism is much more forceful than fascism. Fascism could become forceful only by spoiling Nietzsche, namely, by returning to the European national state which for Nietzsche was a matter of the past. But on the other hand, one must say that this corruption of Nietzsche could hardly be avoided, for no political movement in our age without mass support and without mass appeal. Nietzsche's appeal to the future aristocracy of Europe, to the few, lacks mass support entirely. But the deepest difference between Nietzsche and Marx is this: from Nietzsche's point of view the Marxian concern with justice, the Marxian loathing of exploitation, reveals a connection between Marxism and Christianity, the Christian morality. There are quite a few people who say Marxism is a Christian heresy, meaning it still shares some

form [blank space]. Now Nietzsche's point is this: without the Christian God there cannot be a Christian morality, and therefore a break with the morality of anti-exploitation, and so on, is inevitable.

Now what is common, then, to Nietzsche and fascism? First, the point that some men or groups of men are and ought to be the masters of the rest. Secondly, the rejection of biblical morality: exploitation is inevitable and unobjectionable; no compassion for the weak, for the underdog; ruthlessness. Nietzsche's formula: the blond beast; in a way, the superman. But we must add immediately, and which indicates the great difference between Nietzsche and Fascism, according to Nietzsche the superman is Caesar with the soul of Christ. This shows, reaches into the depths into which fascism does not sink. So Nietzsche's relation to fascism is much more complex than that of Marx to communism, to present-day communism; and the best comparison of Nietzsche's relation to fascism would be of Rousseau and the French Revolution. Rousseau would have thoroughly disapproved of the French Revolution, and yet in a way he was responsible for that. Nietzsche would have run away from Hitler['s] Germany; and yet there is some connection. Very generally stated, what you can say and what you cannot say with decency, that is decisive ultimately for men's actions. Rousseau made certain things sayable which prepared the French Revolution: *le peuple est bon*—the people is good—meaning the *people* is good, not the upper class. That is only one step from here to the aristocrat [blank space]. And when Nietzsche speaks of the merciless extinction of millions, absolutely necessary thing, he did not think of what Eichmann and such people did; but after this was sayable, God knows what would come. This indirect responsibility of Nietzsche for fascism, I think, is undeniable.

Now of course there are people who try to conceal this connection between Nietzsche and fascism, National Socialism, and very decent men. For example, Jaspers, a well-known German philosopher, denies that there is any such connection, but on the basis of the following view: Nietzsche has no doctrine whatever, and hence also no political doctrine. What Nietzsche is doing is simply to awaken men; all sorts of Nietzsche are only experiments for liberating men from various kinds of dogmatism. And Jaspers can without difficulty quote from pro-democratic and pro-liberal remarks of Nietzsche, but unfortunately these remarks all belong to an early period of Nietzsche. You know Nietzsche played around with positivism and liberal democracy for some years, but this was not yet *the* Nietzsche; and the Nietzsche never had any sympathy for liberal democracy and never was even a conservative in the ordinary sense of the word. This is simply a kind of apologetic which is in the best case confusion, and in the worst case a disgrace.

One thing however must be said immediately. Only a very small part of Nietzsche, in a way the least important part of Nietzsche, enters fascism. The substance of Nietzsche's thought eludes fascism, or any other mass movement. Nevertheless, even this substance of Nietzsche shines through if we consider fascism in its difference both from liberal democracy and communism. Communism calls itself dialectical materialism, and dialectical means the same as scientific—not in the Western sense, but in the Marx-Hegelian sense. And within liberal democracy *the* authority is (every one of you knows that as well as I do) science: the only authority in liberal democracy, science. So this is a thing common to liberal democracy and Marxism, the respect for science. Hence the famous delusions in the Western world that communism must become soft because it needs science—do you remember; you must have heard that—and the sciences become . . . you know, they will transform Russia gradually into something approaching a liberal

democracy. At any rate, the belief in science, however science may be understood, the belief in reason, in the intellect, is common to Marxism and liberal democracy.

Now Nietzsche is the most outstanding anti-rationalist, anti-intellectualist philosopher. And this is shown very clearly by his progeny in the Western world—and only in the Western world is there a progeny of Nietzsche—existentialism and psychoanalysis. These great forces in the Western world are the progeny of Nietzsche, and they have surely this in common, in spite of all their differences: the anti-rationalist, anti-intellectualist intention. Nietzsche questions science; in his own words he views science from the point of view of art, and art from the point of view of life. One of his earlier writings is called "Of the Use and Abuse of History for Life," or the advantage and disadvantage of history for life. History, meaning the study of history, is viewed form the point of view of life. Nietzsche's questioning of science, which we will find here when we study *Beyond Good and Evil*, and precisely in the first chapter, is of course not unprecedented. There has been throughout the ages a questioning of science, reason, philosophy, but on the basis of faith or of the other-life. Nietzsche questions science from the point of view of *this* life, and he does not even say any more "of this life," because he takes it for granted, this life is the only life. Science is derivative from life, remote from life, hostile to life. Why? Science means to be objective, and objective means to be detached. But life is attachment. A simple example: we look at a fishbowl, the big fish swallowing the small ones: We are detached; we observe that. Well, perhaps we have a special interest for biology, but it does not concern us.

Now since olden times, however, this world of the big fish swallowing the small ones was applied to human beings: that among human beings too the big fish, the fat boys, swallow the small ones. In other words, the observer is also swallowed or swallows. Can you be detached here? But as an observer of these human struggles, he is unconcerned with the fact that he too will either swallow or be swallowed. As an observer, he forgets himself, his situation as a human being. Does this oblivion of the human situation not deprive his observations of their significance? This has begun to attack present-day social science. You must have heard of the expression "participant-observer"—you know, an observer who is not merely looking but who is also swallowing or being swallowed; otherwise he wouldn't participate. Is the knowledge of the participant-observer only quantitatively different from the mere observer, in other words, that he acts as a kind of spy and finds out all the little secrets which you cannot find out except by living your thesis, or is there a qualitative difference between the simple observer, the mere observer, or the participant-observer? Now if there should be a qualitative difference between the participant-observer and the mere observer, then the question arises: Must the results of the participant-observation be eventually integrated into a whole which belongs to the mere observer, or is the ultimate judgment, the ultimate understanding of human things not that of participant-observer in contradistinction to mere observer?

Now there is of course this great difficulty: the observer is an indeterminate human being; he must only be a human being who can read pointers and some other things. In other words, he can be of what age, what nation, what sex, and so on and so on, he wants. This precisely means the objectivity of science, that no particularity of any kind is required of the observer, except these purely uninteresting ones—he must be reasonably intelligent, and this kind of thing—which are neutral. If, on the other hand, his participation becomes an integral part of observation, of valuable observation, then we are confronted with the fact that there is an infinite variety of

societies in which a man can participate. In that case knowledge will be necessarily subjective. The question then is—and this is today a commonplace in so-called methodological discussions, but it is a commonplace largely by virtue of the effect which Nietzsche has already had: Can we understand human things in detachment without being affected—or without being subject to something higher; that doesn't make any difference. But objective would mean we can understand human things without being affected *or* without being subject to something higher. The common denominator of being affected or being subject to something higher is will. Can we understand human things without willing, evaluating, having made a decision?

If we start form our social science today, that is the most simple access to what Nietzsche means. Nietzsche raised this question clearly for the first time in his second "Thoughts Out of Season" from "Of the Use and Abuse of History"—literally, of the advantages and disadvantages of history "for life." If this was the first attack on objective social science, given the state of things in Germany at that time, where social science in our sense didn't exist, it was an attack on history, on the study of history, on objective history. And the point which Nietzsche makes is that there is an essential disproportion between the historian and the actor. Now this of course is in itself universally admitted: the historian as historian doesn't act; the actor as actor is not a historian. I mean, if Truman writes his memoirs, he does it when he does no longer act, and vice versa. But the point which Nietzsche makes is this, that this disproportion between the historian and the actor prevents the historian from being a good historian. The historian, the individual historian, is part of *the* universe of historians. All particular historical studies are part of a universal history in the process of being written and being rewritten. This universal history does not know any essential limitations; it is objective. It is free from any limitations, and this shows itself by the fact that it is not based on any specific value. It studies with the same lack, with the same indifference all historical phenomena, all values. The actors, however, necessarily have a limited horizon—and not merely that they cannot foresee the future; that's also true of the historians—but that it is impossible to act without having embraced specific values. In this sense the actor is necessarily limited.

Now does this disproportion not render impossible historical study? A simple example: the historian of philosophy. He studies the philosophies in the same way in which the student of law studies [blank space], and so on and so on. But can one study the history of philosophy without philosophizing? It is impossible; the answer is no. You can say all kinds of useful information, a kind of telephone directory you can make; but you cannot understand. Also history of religion by an areligious man, the history of music by an unmusical man. But since this is so, and since there is not religion in general but this or that religion, since there is not philosophy in general but this or that philosophy, can history be objective or neutral? Every historian raises questions. The questions as he raises them are not inherent in his subject matter. They are *his* questions, and these questions depend on his point of view. There is an indefinite variety of points of view, and one cannot say that there can be only a single point of view. There is not this single point of view. Take a simple example: the history of the Reformation, written by a Catholic, by a Protestant, and by an unbeliever. Well, regarding mere facts there might be [blank space], but regarding the emphasis, they will disagree, necessarily. Now, but the emphasis is the thing which gives life and light to the history; the other is again nothing but a telephone directory. And here, how can you decide, how can the historian decide between the three positions, the Catholic, the Protestant, and the unbelieving position? And perhaps there are more such positions. Also the

variety of generations. The Civil War in this country—how differently it appears today from what it appeared around 1880. Well, you are familiar, because that is really today a very well known . . . so much so that someone has written an essay, I believe—Carl Becker, "every man his own historian"[i] or something of this kind. In other words, this kind of relativity is today a matter of course. But what Nietzsche has in mind is much deeper: that all history—and there are certain consequences regarding all human thought, but . . . in this early writing. The historian analyzes certain things; let us call them the objects of analysis. But the historian himself views things from a certain point of view. He makes certain presuppositions. These presuppositions themselves as such are historical; they are not of his own making, and they are in a way imposed on him. This history which is a presupposition of all analysis cannot itself be the object of analysis. One can say that this is the point at which Nietzsche's analysis aims. The premises from which we start—from which all human thought starts—cannot be the object of analysis. They are dark; they are shrouded in darkness. And yet they differ among men; we don't have to say from individual to individual, but they differ. There is a great variety of presuppositions, and the conflict between them is as much . . . while it is obvious, but it is in itself as elusive as any particular set of presuppositions.

Let me try to state this somewhat differently. There is no life worthy of human beings without dedication to ideals. This is the starting point of Nietzsche, we can say. Now science, history, shows the subjective character of all ideals, say, the ideals of the Romans, the ideals of the Hindus: they are relative *to* the Romans, to the Hindus; they are not ideals for man as man. By showing the subjective character of all ideals, science destroys the conditions of life, the condition of life being the dedication to ideals. It shows, science shows the perishable character of all ideals. The same appears if we take, if we look at the other side: science in its objectivity, in its fairness respects all ideals. It is not parochial, written, say, from the European or maybe American point of view, but it respects the Chinese ideals, the Hindu ideals, the Eskimo ideals and so on. But by respecting all ideals, it stands above all ideals: it looks down; it is not committed to ideals. And this means that the highest human thought, the most comprehensive human thought is above all ideals. The depreciation of ideals follows [blank space] and therefore this is the primary meaning of the conflict between life and knowledge or science. The conclusion which would follow from that—and it has been drawn by quite a few people after Nietzsche—is this: there must be admitted a fundamental distinction between two kinds of science, a science of man and a science of non-man, let us call it [blank space] natural science. The science of man must be affected, committed, cannot be objective or neutral, whereas the science of non-man cannot but be detached. This is, I think, a view which is partly implied in Max Weber but which you find from time to time also in American literature. But once you admit such a dualism of the sciences, you are forced to wonder what is the relation of the two kinds, because some unity of the science is essential. One way of finding unity on this basis is this: to say that the science of man, the affected, committed science must be subordinated to the universal science, the science of nature. And this means that the science of man and human things, the human science is irretrievably inferior to natural science. It can never become what it *should* become, namely, scientific. And this is a very easy way of solving the matter. Of course you cannot expect of the students of man the objectivity which the natural scientists have;

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[i] Carl Becker, "Everyman His Own Historian," annual address of the president of the American Historical Association, delivered at Minneapolis, December 29, 1931, *American Historical Review* 37 (1932): 221-36.

therefore it always remains subjective, having something in common with the novel and impressionistic things, you know?

That is one way of doing it. The other is to say: No, this is impossible because it is in conflict with the fact that man is higher than non-man. This depreciation of the science of man in favor of the science of non-man is incompatible with the rank of man, and therefore we must subordinate natural science to the human science. And that would mean, on the basis of this schema, that natural science itself must be considered to be subjective. Now, how is this possible? When you hear what people say now about natural science, you will hear them talk that the facts, as far as these people are concerned, are the least interesting parts of the thesis. The interesting points of the thesis are the theory, and that has to do with the conceptual framework. And sometimes you hear even the expression "the categories." The categories. So whatever these categories may be, and we will hear something about them from Nietzsche, the categories are the basis of natural science. They supply the highest points of view. But what would happen if these categories would prove to be changeable, would prove to be historical, so that when an ancient physicist—and not Aristotle; a man very close in many things, as Epicurus or Democritus—would look at a natural phenomenon, the highest principles would be different; there would be a different color, scheme, emphasis than in the case of a modern physicist?

Now if the categories themselves, the highest universals, are in themselves historical, then you have in principle the reduction of natural science to the human sciences, because the history and historical change is of course the primary theme of the *human* sciences and not of natural science. In a word, this view maintains all universals, the very highest, including the principle of contradiction, depend ultimately on the particulars, the specific human, not the human in general. This is in a very rough way what Nietzsche is trying to do, to criticize science from the point of view of history. Spengler has made this view rather popular when he spoke of science as Western science; for example, mathematics: Western mathematics in contradistinction to Babylonian mathematics, Greek mathematics, Chinese mathematics, and so on and so on. This of course would be perfectly compatible with the fact that Western science can become universally accepted all over the globe because this would simply mean that the world is undergoing a Westernization altogether, although this would not in itself refute this assertion.

Today we have in the social sciences, where all these difficulties are reflected as in a somewhat dim, not to say slightly dirty, medium, in the famous distinction between facts and values: the objective facts, but the subjective values. This is believed to settle all the difficulties. But there are great difficulties arising on the basis of the very distinction, difficulties which I will not mention; I do not discuss them now. But let us assume for one moment that the difficulties are fearful, so that one cannot leave it at the distinction between objective facts and subjective values. There are two ways out of this dilemma: either to say there are objective values, if I accept this way of talking for a moment—this is the old view, the greatest name, Plato; or the other way to get out of this difficulty is to say [that] not only the values are subjective, the facts too are in a radical sense subjective—the diametrically opposite view to Plato. That is Nietzsche's view: there are no facts in the sense of objective fact.

I think we should read, if we have time—yes, we can still do that—the last aphorism of Nietzsche's *Dawn of Morning*—Dawn of Day, they call it here—which gives an indication of

what this difficulty involved. I have not checked on the translation. I know from older experience the translation is not very good, but . . . all right.

> *We Aeronauts of the Intellect*.—All those bold birds which soar into far and farthest space will somewhere or other surely find themselves unable to proceed on their flight, and perch down on a mast or narrow ledge, and be grateful for this wretched accommodation. But who would infer herefrom that there was not an immense free space in front of them, that they had flown as far as they could possibly fly? All our great teachers and predecessors have, in the end, come to a standstill, and it is not the noblest or most graceful movement with which the weary pause: the same thing will happen to me and to you [meaning they will say this is not the most graceful posture; Nietzsche says that's the end of all of us—LS]. But what does this matter to me or to you? Other birds will fly further! Our insight and credulity fly with them in soaring far out on high, they rise straight above our heads and its impotence, and from thence will survey the distant horizon, seeing the crowds of birds, much more powerful than we are, flying before them, striving whither we have striven, and where all is sea and nothing but sea! And whither then are we bound? Do we want to cross the sea? Whither does this powerful desire urge us, which we value more highly than any delight? Why just in this direction, thither where the suns of humanity have always set[ii]? Will they perhaps, one day, relate of us that we also soared westward, hoping to reach India, but that it was our fate to be wrecked on the rock of eternity? Oh, my brothers? Or?[iii]

This is the problem of history as it presented itself to Nietzsche. I can say that what we will do in this course is to see how Nietzsche tried to overcome, to answer this question stated in this simile here, in this metaphor here at the end of *Dawn of Morning*.

A word about Nietzsche's writings and an explanation of my selection. There are many statements of Nietzsche to the effect that his greatest work and his decisive work is a work called *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. But he also said that *Zarathustra* is only the vestibule of a book which he did not write but which he prepared, and which has been called since the *Will to Power*. So it seems that at least *Zarathustra* and Will to Power are much more important works from Nietzsche's point of view than what we read here. But there are various reasons why we cannot read either *Zarathustra*—it is very hard to imagine a seminar paper on twenty, thirty pages of *Zarathustra*, as every one of you who has had a look at that book will agree—and in the case of the Will to Power the difficulties are even greater. I selected *Beyond Good and Evil* on a very simple ground. It is a relatively late book of Nietzsche; in other words, there is hardly any development of his thought later than *Beyond Good and Evil*—that is the book which we will read here—and in addition I believe it is Nietzsche's most beautiful book. He himself says the following thing which I read to you, which gives me a partial alibi: he says, rather late in his life, in order to understand him one should begin with his latest work[s], *Beyond Good and Evil* and *Genealogy of Morals*, because they are the most comprehensive and the most important. He himself liked best his *Dawn of Day* and *The Gay Science*; but still, the question of his private likes is less important than the question of his judgment as to what is most important.

[ii] In original: "suns of humanity have always perished"

[iii] *Dawn of Day*, sec. 575, trans. Johanna Volz (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1903), 386-87.

Now we turn then immediately to Beyond Good and Evil, and turn to the preface. A brief word about the title. "Beyond good and evil," what that means we will see when we go through the book. The subtitle is "A Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future." You notice that he doesn't say "to *the* philosophy of the future," but "to *a* philosophy of the future." It is a philosophy of the *future*—belonging to the future, but also in another sense. The philosophers of old believed that they could find the eternal truth. Whether there is such a thing is for Nietzsche a very great problem. Truth is historical, belonging to time somehow; and from this point of view the highest philosophy would be the philosophy of the future. And philosophy of the future means also and above all a new *type* of philosophy. It is not merely a new system added to the series of systems already in existence; it is a new type of philosophy. And it is *a* philosophy of the future, one among a number: no claim to universal validity from the point of view of philosophy. And it is concerned with the future because it is concerned with the future of Europe, as we see in the preface. Now what Nietzsche calls Europe is of course Europe, all right; but its equivalent in our thought today, in our situation, would of course be the West. Now you have the text in front of you. Just read the beginning of the preface.

Student: "Supposing that Truth is a woman . . . for winning a woman?"[iv]

LS: Well, he uses a somewhat cruder term in German: "A female," you could also say: *Frauenzimmer*. I mean, it is not respectful. Yes?

Student: "Certainly . . . discouraged mein . . ."

LS: Yes, let us stop here for one moment. You see, he starts from a presupposition or assumption, that truth is a woman. What a terrible presupposition, and how unworthy of a philosopher! After all [blank space] serious men don't make such silly things. What does this mean? Well, first, a woman, I take it, is a person. Nietzsche wants to say somehow truth is not an abstraction. Now that truth is a person is not a new thing. The medieval view, *Deus veritas*, God is the truth, shows that. It says truth is a person. God, the highest good, is the object of the deepest love; and women—that is obviously something to do with love; we know from the top American Journal of Sociology. So it is, woman is the goal of love indeed; but as it appears very clearly from the context, a love not accompanied by reverence, as the love of God. Perhaps it is the object of an unhappy love. There is, as you will read in *Dawn of Day*, aphorism 429, the desire for knowledge, the desire for discovery and [divination?];[v] discovering, uncovering—they go together in one way or another—is perhaps an unhappy love, Nietzsche says. In the *Gay Science*, aphorism 227, he speaks of the possibility that the truth might be a repulsive old woman. I mean, you can see clearly [blank space]. But in the first aphorism of this work, he speaks of the Sphinx as an old symbol of the truth. Now why do people make this presupposition—[vi] —The philosophers are lovers of the truth, and they fail to win it. Perhaps they fail to win it because truth is a woman. In that case, they had to fail because of their obvious heavy-handed and clumsy "method." I mean, you cannot win a woman with method, and the philosophers use method.

[iv] Preface, Modern Library edition, 377.

[v] Word in brackets in the original transcript.

[vi] The tape was changed at this point.

There is a certain similarity of Nietzsche's remark on truth with a famous remark of Machiavelli on Fortuna, which you doubtless remember. Machiavelli compares Fortuna to a woman and says: Therefore she can only be won as a woman is won. And Machiavelli, who was less delicate in such matters apparently than Nietzsche, says: Fortuna is therefore won most easily by the young, because they use force and violence. Now Nietzsche of course would regard this method of force and violence as most impractical if you want to win that woman called truth. The right method, Nietzsche implies, would be some graceful seduction rather than force.

Now the philosophers in question are dogmatists, and dogmatists are always understood in contradistinction to skeptics. But the skeptics can be disregarded because the skeptics do not even hope to win truth. So whatever may be thought about them—Nietzsche will have to say something about skeptics later—but in the primary question of truth and how to win truth, he can disregard the skeptics who despair from the outset. He says the situation of dogmatism today . . . today dogmatism is disregarded, defeated. Now let us go on here.

Student: " —*if*, indeed, it stands at all!"

LS: Dogmatism.

Student: "For there are scoffers . . . all-too-human facts."[vii]

LS: Let us stop here. "Human, all-too-human" is an expression coined by Nietzsche in a book, an earlier book of his which is called *Human, All-Too-Human*. Now at this point he says that that dogmatism is discouraged, defeated, perhaps about to expire. But from this moment he changes his tone and says "seriously spoken," and this refers not only to those who mock dogmatism, but he is at the same time a serious critic of it. The serious criticism is this: dogmatism is naiveté. Naiveté: it depends on popular superstition, *or* on grammar, *or* on misplaced boldness. Now on grammar, this Nietzsche himself did: Truth is a woman. It is not clear in English but in almost every other Western language it is clear: *Warheit* in German; *verité*; *veritas*; *alethe*—they are all feminine words. And why is truth regarded as a woman? Because the word "truth" is of feminine gender. So Nietzsche gave us a specimen of what he regards as metaphysics by treating truth as a woman.

But to come back to the serious point, dogmatism is based on a naiveté of one kind or another, and the misplaced boldness, meaning the boldness of parochialism: some very limited human experience is made to be *the* fundamental fact. Nietzsche does not—we cannot read the whole—Nietzsche does not deny the greatness of dogmatism. It is at least as great as astrology and alchemy. And he gives some examples: without astrology, no pyramids, no other great art, architecture in Egypt and in Asia. So Nietzsche does not deny the greatness of dogmatism, but it is a kind of greatness which is no longer necessary or even salutary. Once it fulfilled a great function; now it is possibly disastrous. The most dangerous of all errors is mentioned in the sequel—we must skip now a bit—when he comes to speak of Plato, that the "worst, most lasting and most dangerous of all errors hitherto was the dogmatist's error, namely, Plato's invention of the pure mind, and of the good in itself." This is the first inkling of what Nietzsche's whole

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[vii] Preface, 377.

philosophy is all about: there is no pure mind; there is no good in itself. But, very well; let us assume that this is so, that this is a very powerful error and a typically dogmatist error; why is the refutation of Plato—because Nietzsche goes on to say, "but now, after this has been overcome": in other words, no one any more believes in the pure mind and in the good in itself. Why is it necessary . . . Why is there any difficulty? Who believes . . . I mean, think of the period where John Stuart Mill's *Logic* was probably the most famous philosophic book in the Western world. Why is the refutation of Plato still needed? Why is it above all the refutation of dogmatism . . . After all, there were other dogmatists. Let us not forget the materialism which was rampant in the nineteenth century. Let us not forget Epicureanism, and they all also were dogmatists. Why does Nietzsche not say a word about these other forms of dogmatism, which would seem only fair, to say nothing of Aristotle, and of Hegel, and many others. Nietzsche gives an explanation in what follows. Can you read that, the sequel?

Student: "But now when it has been surmounted . . . to speak of Spirit—"

LS: "To speak of the mind."

Student: "of the Mind and the Good as Plato spoke of them."

LS: So Plato has put the truth on her head—I say on *her* head because we have heard that truth is a woman—by denying the perspectivic character of knowledge. Truth is perspectivic, i.e., not absolute. Truth always belongs to a specific perspective, to a specific point of view. But does not *all* dogmatism deny that, this perspectivity? Surely, because if you take, say, Lucretius's presentation of the Epicurean doctrine, that is also universally true and not relative to any particular perspective. Plato is important only because he is *the* classic of dogmatism, not the only dogmatist; and moreover, let us read, "But the fight against Plato."

Student: "But the struggle . . . Platonism for the 'people')—"[viii]

LS: Let us stop here for one moment. Platonism is the unpopular core of Christianity. The other forms of dogmatism, say, Epicureanism, materialism, and so on lack the historical power of Plato; therefore Plato is of such a special importance. But one can however also give the following reason: all dogmatism is intellectualistic, however materialistic its doctrine may be. For example, the atoms, the atoms of Democritus, and the void: Can they be sensibly perceived? Can matter be sensibly perceived? If people speak today, the anti-Platonists, the most common form of anti-Platonism today, the empiricists, as they call themselves; but what is the basis, the stronghold of this so-called empiricism? Science. But what is that science in its core? Theoretical physics, mathematical physics. And mathematics has very much to do, whatever these people say, with the pure mind of Plato. It is also clear that Nietzsche in this preface wishes to appeal to some prejudice of his age: this empiricist, positivistic, anti-Platonic, anti-Christian prejudice. That is also . . . this rhetorical element must not be completely forgotten. But Europe is already free from Plato's error, so why the fight? Why Nietzsche's fight? Because the situation after the liberation is so ambiguous. There is the possibility, of which he has spoken in what we have read, of falling asleep. The effort which was required for fighting Platonism has ceased; and the

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[viii] 378.

effort ceasing, the tiredness takes over. People fall asleep. The alternative is to use the force which the struggle against Platonism and Christianity has raised. However wrong Plato is, the struggle against Platonism has contributed to man's growth. The tension of the mind now existing in Europe surpasses every earlier tension of the mind.

Now let us read this, where we left off: this fight against Plato "has created in Europe."

Student: "produced in Europe a magnificent tension of soul—"

LS: No. Why not "mind," as Nietzsche has said before? It is of course not the pure mind anymore, but by denying a pure mind, Nietzsche doesn't deny mind. Good.

Student: "tension of mind . . . aimed at the furthest goals."[ix]

LS: Now one moment. Nietzsche shares the opinion of most of his contemporaries that a progress has been made beyond everything else before, although he differs as to the locus, the character of the progress. Never was there such a magnificent tension of the mind as it exists now in Europe. Yes?

Student: "As a matter of fact, the European feels . . . bring it about that the spirit—the mind—would not so easily find itself in 'distress'!"[x]

LS: In other words, because it would simply evaporate. So let us come back: the tension of the mind now existing in Europe surpasses every earlier tension of the mind. But there is a danger because people don't like to live in this tension. The danger exists that the tension is regarded as an unpleasantness of which one should get rid, and this is indeed—the attempt to get rid of the tension—has been made twice: first by Jesuitism, and then by democratic enlightenment. Why does Nietzsche choose these two phenomena, Jesuitism and the democratic enlightenment? I mean, democratic enlightenment, that makes sense because you can say the democratic enlightenment can easily lead to the fact that the tension of the mind is something of which one should get rid. I mean Nietzsche spoke of newspapers; we live in the age of TV and can make this experience every day, how much any possible tension of the mind can be disposed of by the verities we hear, not from Gary Cooper, but from the people who talk about serious things over the TV. Now, but why does he speak of Jesuitism? He has something very special in mind. Who was the most famous opponent of the Jesuits, or vice versa?

Student: Pascal.

LS: Pascal, exactly. Now what Nietzsche has in mind is this, that what in the seventeenth century Pascal tried to do as a Christian, Nietzsche does in the nineteenth century as an anti-Christian. But there is a deep kinship between him and Pascal, as [is] evidenced on many occasions by him here. The democratic enlightenment. What Nietzsche means then here is this: the democratic enlightenment, in a way the strongest force of the nineteenth century, remains below the level of modern man. It is a decay of modern man. Yes, and now the end of this statement. Let us forget

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[ix] This doesn't appear to be the Modern Library translation.
[x] 379.

what he says there about . . . well, you can read it, all right. "The Germans have invented gunpowder."

Student: "(The Germans invented gunpowder . . . they invented printing.)"

LS: Well, this is of course not a mere nasty quip, but because he spoke in a derogatory way about the democratic enlightenment, and in Germany there was still probably majority opinion against democratic enlightenment, he wants to make clear that he has nothing to do with German nationalism, the alternative to democratic enlightenment, you know? Good. And—

Student: "But we, who are neither Jesuits . . . *the goal to aim at* . . . ."[xi]

LS: The goal, yes. So the true use of this tension of the mind which surpasses all earlier tensions is to find a new goal. And Nietzsche uses here the definite article: *the* goal. *The* goal is a new goal, obviously must be a new goal. It cannot be Platonic or Christian, but it must be more specifically *post*-Platonic and post-Christian because it requires the tension, the tension which was created by the millennial fight against Christianity and Platonism. And furthermore it must be determined in a non-Platonic manner. The Platonic manner would be to determine it by the pure mind. In other words, the goal is not only new but it is also a goal of a radically different kind. This is what Nietzsche indicates in the preface. And then . . . by the way, this, what he says here, "we free, very free minds"—or spirits, as he translates it. The second chapter has the title "The Free Mind," and it is a critique of the free mind because the free mind is not free—I mean the free-thinker. Free-thinker. Free mind, *freie Geist*, is the German version of what is called, what the French call *libres penseurs*, and I think free-thinkers in English. They are not good enough for Nietzsche and therefore the "we free, *very* free minds."

So then we must see; Nietzsche opens . . . You see, but the book is concerned with a *philosophy* of the future, and it is an attack on *the* philosophy, on all philosophy of the past, on all dogmatic philosophy. And from Nietzsche's point of view even those modern thinkers, like Kant, who claim to be anti-dogmatist are in fact also dogmatic thinkers, which means his notion of dogmatic thinking is not the Kantian notion any more. And therefore, because it is concerned with philosophy, with showing the way toward a *new* philosophy, he begins the book with a chapter devoted to "The Prejudice of the Philosophers." Philosophy, the attempt to liberate the mind from the prejudices, is itself based on prejudice, and therefore it is condemned by its own standards. And the question is what precisely are these prejudices, and what would follow? How can philosophy—what could a philosophy be free from these millennial prejudices? We cannot say more at this point. We have a few minutes if you would like to bring up some of the points which I tried to make clear and which may not at all have become clear.

Remainder of recording further deteriorates; the following is the gist of the fairly audible parts of the question-and-answer period.[xii]

Student: [Question regarding political atheism of the right]

[xi] 379.

[xii] As noted by the transcriber.

LS: Well, did you understand political atheism of the left? All right; now if you would look back you would see that there was never a political movement as such where atheism appeared as it were on the flag in public before the nineteenth century. Political atheism is a recent phenomenon, but it was originally a phenomenon of the left. The right was conservative [connected with business, the altar].[xiii] And then from a certain moment on, there also emerged a political atheism of the right. [Remainder inaudible]

Student: I didn't understand what you meant by it, by political atheism of the right.

LS: A political movement which is definitely atheistic and the atheism is essential to it, and yet it is not egalitarian, in the sense in which even communism is of course egalitarian—I mean this lack of egalitarianism between proletarians and non-proletarians is only provisional; the end stage is egalitarian. To repeat, it is a political movement which is atheistic and anti-egalitarian. And I would say that exists—or existed, if you would say that there is no fascism since the war. Yes, but fascists came in in a particular situation [blank space] in a predominantly Catholic people [blank space] and if you raise the question where is the origin, the theoretical origin of that [blank space] I believe you would find no more outstanding individual than Nietzsche. I mean, "God is dead"; that is his famous formula. And that is a long question what that means, and a long question of whether that is his last word or not, but what we hear most loudly said is this, and it affected especially the country in which he lived. [Inaudible section] I mean, this was in Hegel's view an absurdity; but absurdities do not mean that they didn't exist. [Inaudible section]

Student: [Inaudible question to the effect: Is political atheism to be understood only as a denial of the existence of God or is it also the denial of other values, like perhaps a higher morality?]

LS: That is an entirely different question. What Nietzsche claims is of course that the death of God, as he called it, made possible that man acquire a higher stature than he had ever before—that is the minimum; but nevertheless that doesn't cease to be atheism for this reason.

Student: [Inaudible, to the effect: Does that mean also the rejection of values?]

LS: Of course not. Nietzsche's key word is the reevaluation of all values. Surely not. Then it would be an absurdity. This kind of thing can only happen in classrooms, you know, I mean the rejection of . . . we wouldn't read Nietzsche, no one would read Nietzsche if he would simply say . . . no.

[end of session]

[xiii] Bracketed material in original.

Session 2: no date

Leo Strauss: [in progress] —but that is of course very difficult, in a way much more difficult than any assignment ever given in these seminars because of the peculiar character of Nietzsche's writings.[i] Now there were quite a few things which I cannot possibly discuss because they would take too long. When you guessed—I remember one case when you guessed he refers to Goethe and Schiller, I am sure there is no basis for that, but let us not . . . that would be infinite! It is impractical to discuss that. Now I would rather say this: you made clear that . . . Nietzsche made in the very preface an attack on all philosophy before him. So the question is what then does he put in the place of philosophy, because he calls it a philosophy of the future. Now you said a new psychology; that is absolutely correct, and he says so. But of course that is not a good answer, because we do not know in what the novelty of this psychology consists. We come to that point later.

Also "beyond good and evil" is perhaps not sufficient; one could easily show that Spinoza's philosophy, for example, as Nietzsche himself knew, is beyond good and evil, although perhaps not quite in the same sense as Nietzsche meant it. So what is the unique character of Nietzsche's philosophy which distinguishes it from all earlier philosophies? This I think could become clear from the first chapter.

Student: I thought that the unique character was his putting everything heretofore in doubt and starting off on a completely new basis. But perhaps every philosopher has . . .

LS: Not every, but quite a few—especially Descartes, whom he quotes, but quite a few others.

Student: Except that he would say that Descartes and everybody else that claimed it did not really do it.

LS: They didn't do it well. Yes, all right; but then this claim is not in itself . . . is nothing revealing, unless he has succeeded where the others failed. But what then is the new, the manifestly new thing which no one has ever said before? I mean, what is the center of this new psychology?

Student: I think that the center of this new psychology is the impulse to power rather than . . .

LS: Yes. Why don't you use a word which Nietzsche himself uses: *will* to power. We must be a bit more precise: will to power. And that is indeed the novel teaching, and that is the meaning of the psychology which Nietzsche has in mind, will to power. But how does the previous philosophy appear in the light of Nietzsche's discovery of the will to power? You said that, but I wish you to repeat it now.

Student: I can't remember what it was . . .

LS: What was the claim of the previous philosophers?

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[i] Strauss responds to a student's paper, read at the beginning of the session. The reading was not recorded.

Student: The claim of the previous philosophers was to obtain truth.

LS: Yes, and what does Nietzsche say? That they failed to obtain truth, that goes without saying; but that is not characteristic of him.

Student: That this is not even of concern, of worth.

LS: But what prompted these men?

Student: The false premise that there was . . .

LS: No, that is a detail. What prompted all of them? What is underlying the Stoic doctrine, or Spinoza's doctrine, or Kant's doctrine? What is it?

Student: Without going too deep, I would say it is that these things could be known.

LS: Yes, but that is derivative. The will to *power*, and not the will to truth. It is very clear. And what about Nietzsche himself, what is moving him in his philosophizing? The will to truth in contradistinction to the will to power, or what?

Student: No, he would deny this and say that it is the will to power . . .

LS: In him, too. [Yes!] What then is the difference between him and the earlier philosophers?

Student: He is pointing to a new type of . . .

LS: But still, then we have a word, a new type. What's the precise difference? All philosophers are prompted by the will to power, Nietzsche too, but what's the difference?

Student: He can put his finger on it, whereas . . .

LS: He *knows* it, he does it with his eyes open, what the others did not know. Now since the older philosophers, all earlier philosophers were prompted by the will to power, they did not present *the* truth. But what did they do? They did not discover *the* truth independent of their thought. What did they do? Nietzsche has a word for it, a key word: these are all interpretations. They do not render the pure texts; they are all interpretations.

Now let us turn to the end of aphorism 22. We only have to read the . . . Nietzsche has given a summary of his thought before; we only read the last sentence of aphorism 22.

Student: "Granted that this also is only interpretation—and you will be eager enough to make this objection?—Well, so much the better."[ii]

[ii] 405-6.

LS: Yes, that's the point. In other words, all philosophy has been interpretation; we can say, to make it a bit more clear, subjective interpretation—the whole seen through a specific temperament, you could almost say. And that is also true of Nietzsche. But Nietzsche says, "all right," and Nietzsche says, even, "all the better." The quest for *the* truth as something preexisting the philosopher, that is the fundamental error. And for Nietzsche the truth is only by virtue of interpretation. This is a paradoxical assertion, and we must gradually try to understand that. Now, why can this be of any concern to us? Why is this not . . . since Nietzsche ended in insanity, as you surely know, why is this not part of the insanity of Nietzsche's . . . affect us? I will take this up immediately, but first there were one or more points in your paper. I will only speak of one thing or two things which you mentioned.

You rightly say that Nietzsche's criticism of Kant, Spinoza, and the others is insufficient. But that does not necessarily—not necessarily—mean that Nietzsche didn't know what he was talking about, and that has very much to do with this peculiar character of Nietzsche's writings. I mean, these are deliberately not academic writings, with all the severe infantry-boots of scholarship, but Nietzsche had more scholarship than one would think. This only as a warning.

Student: I tried to be careful not to . . .

LS: Yes, I know. I know, but still, permit me to make a warning. My chief objection to your paper was this, that you didn't keep a promise, you know, and that is always bad, because you are judged by your own standard: you promised and didn't do it. You said you would show us the order of these aphorisms, because you rightly assumed that they were not just put together at random. You did not show that order. Do you admit that?

Student: No, I would say that I did show that in trying to [blank space] the question.

LS: If you did, I did not know that. All right, we will make [blank space]. And a last very trivial point, why did you say "prejudgment" of philosophy? Because the word which Nietzsche uses—you read it in German, I take it; the German word is "Vorurteilen." The ordinary English . . . that is the same as the English word "prejudices." So that is more famililar, I suppose. [Inaudible sentence][iii] Good.

Now, why does this concern us—I mean, however uninterested we may be in all the other things which Nietzsche raises? Nietzsche is truly challenging the traditional notion of philosophy, I mean the notion of philosophy up to his time, not only the old notion; and that involves of course also the notion of political philosophy in particular but also the notion of science. Because we must . . . this distinction between philosophy and science is a very recent distinction, perhaps two hundred years old, and what Nietzsche has in mind . . . I mean, that people attacked philosophy in the name of science was of course extremely common in the nineteenth century, as it is in our age. But this is a very superficial issue because science itself is something like philosophy. It is only distinguished from philosophy in that it doesn't know that it has philosophic bases. And Nietzsche knows this, of course. Now therefore we must for one moment reflect what this question is.

[iii] As noted by the transcriber.

Now philosophy means—that can be distinctly stated—the quest for knowledge of all things: universal knowledge. Now this of course must be redefined. If I may use a simple example: if someone is interested in knowing what Mr. X whispered into Miss Y's ears, we don't say that's a philosopher. We say only [that] he is curious. But in the moment, however, we raise the question, what is whispering? —not what X whispered to Y, but what is whispering?—we come already, we raise a question which is fundamentally philosophic, because we have to open a whole issue: What is whispering? Why do people whisper? A universal question, no longer the question of here and now but something universal. The concern with knowledge of *kinds* of things, not of the individual things is a simple and old answer to this question. But again we must make a distinction here. There are people who have very good knowledge of classes of things, of kinds of things, whom we would not call philosophers: the carpenter who makes chairs knows not only this particular chair which is now making or repairing, but he knows all chairs if he is a competent carpenter. He knows chair as chair. And yet no one would say that a competent carpenter is a philosopher or a scientist.

Now why is that so? We exclude then the things which are manifestly man-made from philosophy. Philosophy deals with the kind of things manifestly not made by man. For example, let us again take a very simple everyday example. We see a dog with a collar. The collar is man-made; the dog is not man-made. We say therefore the dog *itself*, meaning the dog without the collar. The example is taken from Thucydides, as some of you may remember. Good. The dog itself; and the dog itself, that means dog as it is by nature. Now this particular dog, let us assume, is brown, limps, and is dirty. This everyone can see. Unfortunately, we don't have him here, but you have seen a dog from time to time. This is in itself not the subject of philosophy, of course, but let us leave it at this example. If someone would now say: He is this, he weighs so many pounds, is brown, limps is dirty—all right. And then he adds the remark: No, you forgot the most important thing; the dog is unclean—unclean not in the sense of dirty, but ritually unclean. That's also a quality of a dog. And this somehow seems to have a different character than the other qualities mentioned by the description before

But let us take an example which is very well known to every political scientist today because of foreign aid and similar things. I see a cow which is old and white. Everyone can see that. And then people say: No, that's not the most important thing; the most important thing about the cow is that it is sacred—also a quality of a cow. What about that? Then we have been told by philosophers from the very beginning of philosophy, this quality has a different character. The sacredness does not belong to the cow in the way in which the oldness and whiteness belong to the cow. And the old distinction was [that] the cow is sacred by convention; the other qualities belong to this particular cow by nature. This distinction, nature and convention, was the basis of the orientation of philosophy from the very beginning. By convention—"by convention" is the translation of a Greek word which can also be translated by "by law": *nomos*. Now that doesn't mean an imaginary quality of the cow, as if someone would say: This cow . . . has perhaps drunk and thinks the cow has wings, and only he in his drunkenness sees the wings. That is uninteresting because that's merely private, like a dream. Like in a dream. That is uninteresting. But that the cow is sacred is not a private thing; everyone in India says that it is sacred. So that is a public phenomenon and therefore of much greater importance. So this distinction between nature and convention we must start from if we want to understand anything in Nietzsche.

Again I refer to an example we have discussed in the seminar on Thucydides: the plague in Athens in Pericles's time. This story of the plague somehow must be compared with the story of the plague at the beginning of the *Iliad*. The plague at the beginning of the *Iliad* is sent as a punishment by Apollo. The plague as described by Thucydides is a natural event, not sent by any god. That's an example of the same thing. Now let us return to the simple example of the cow. The cow is white in itself; that is to say, for all men, provided they are not blind—for all men who are competent, i.e., who are not blind. The cow is white in itself for man as man. The cow is sacred *only* for the Hindus. The cow is white in itself—here we have absolutely to add *for* whom it is sacred, by such qualities as sacred. But in the case of qualities like white, we do not have to add anything *for*, because it is for all men. It is not relative to particular men, as the sacredness of the cow. But someone would say: Well, but it is relative to man; certain animals would not see the cow as white. But here the assumption was made by earlier thinkers which can simply be stated as follows: there is no relativity to man as man which endangers the value of his knowledge; it is rather the other way around. Man is the only being, at least on earth, which can see things as they are. A traditional formula for this was: man is the microcosm; man is that peculiar animal, peculiar living being which is open to everything that is, meaning that can perceive everything that is.

Now this distinction between nature and convention from which philosophy starts still exists, but it is now called by a different name; and I will now introduce this different name, not going into the question how this change came about. What originally was meant by natural is now called objective; and what was originally called by convention is now called subjective, i.e., the distinction between dreams and public orders, the comprehensive view of a given society, is now somehow deleted. That would lead us much too far, but let us come back to our white cow. At a certain moment, people said: The cow is not white in itself; it only appears to us beings of a special physiological constitution to be white. What I have in mind is the distinction between primary and secondary qualities which became so famous in the seventeenth century. All sensible qualities—colors, sounds, and so on—are secondary, belong to the human constitution. The cow itself, the thing itself is not color, doesn't give sounds, and so on; only such things like matter and motion are independent of the human constitution. So from now on this view came to the fore and became very powerful. This world of matter and motion, what later on came to be called the world of physics, is the true world. The world as we know it, with its colors, sounds, and so on and so on—and of course sacredness and all this kind of thing—is not the true world. It is the world of appearance. The world of appearance. And this theme, the true world/the world of appearance, goes through Nietzsche's first chapter.

But the next that has to be done: let us assume that the true world is the world of atoms, or similar things; it doesn't make any difference. At a certain moment people began to suspect, while granting that the secondary qualities, as they were called, were merely subjective, that these primary qualities are not the qualities of the things in themselves but are also of human origin. A very popular word today: that they are constructs. An atom strictly understood does not exist; it is a theoretical construct. Now what follows, I mean, without going into any of the very great complications? The secondary qualities are subjective. Where do we find objectivity? Where do we find the true world? Where do we find truth? There is no objective world. All knowledge is knowledge of man-made things, either consciously—like conscious in a construct,

to say nothing of chairs and this kind of thing—or unconsciously, like the colors as they appear to us. All knowledge is knowledge of fictitious things, a theme which goes also through the first chapter of Nietzsche. But if we say this is all fictitious, this doesn't abolish entirely the difference between a now-invented lie by someone, a fiction, and these quasi-necessary fictions, that we see human beings as human beings, or chairs as chairs. This is not interesting, this point. But when we say this is all fictitious, do we not presuppose that we know somehow of the truth? How can you say this is fiction, fictitious, that we see human beings as human beings, dogs as dogs, and so on? So we must then have some awareness of the truth, of the thing in itself, as it came to be called. But it was said . . . we know somehow that there is a thing in itself, but we do not know it. And this is of course hard to maintain, because how can we say that the thing in itself is if it is wholly unknowable? That is a great difficulty.

The last step—I mean, and I omit infinitely important steps—is this: since we do not know even of the existence of a thing in itself, we must abolish the distinction between the thing in itself and the world of appearance, between the true world and the world of appearance. There is—and this was the decisive step taken by Nietzsche—there is only one world; there is no true world behind it. And yet we know of this true world that it originates in man, in human interpretation. It is what it is by virtue of human interpretation, by virtue of subjectivity. And this is true on all levels, whether we take what all men at all times have seen, say, green trees, or whether we see something which only one man perhaps has truly experienced. Again, in this very provisional description, one can say this; but we need some distinction within the world, within knowledge or awareness, in the most general sense. At the end of this process we find that the distinction between objective and subjective, the modern form of the distinction between nature and convention, becomes replaced by a new distinction: what is accessible equally to all men of all times—which was originally, had originally the highest priority because it was not due to any particularity of races, of peoples, of individuals—receives now the opposite evaluation. What is accessible to all men in all times, regardless of all differences, is the most superficial thing. The distinction between the superficial and the profound takes the place of the distinction between objective and subjective.

But what does profound mean? We must again go back to the premodern notion of nature, and Nietzsche discusses this specifically in aphorism 9. The premodern notion of nature led to the consequence that the good life is the life according to nature. To live well means to live according to nature. Nature is here understood as a term of distinction; for some reason which we cannot go into now, it is assumed that a man who lives, say, as miser, or who surrenders to all stimuli or whatever, does not live according to nature—although the stimuli are natural, yet it is not the life according to nature.

I shall not go into the question how this is possible to say, but I would like only to speak now of the modern difficulty. This seemed to be, long before Nietzsche, a very dogmatic assertion—you know, one of these prejudices—that to live according to nature is to live well. It presupposed without examination, it was maintained, that nature is ordered, that nature is good. *If* nature is good, of course you should live according to nature, but how do you know? You cannot examine this except in the light of examination. Now this, by the way . . . this is even true of hedonism, modern or ancient, because every hedonist says pleasures are to be preferred to pains and are in fact preferred to pains if they are clearly seen. But this distinction is clearly a natural distinction:

pleasures and pains are primarily at least natural. And the pleasures are by nature good; the pains are by nature bad. That's the basis of hedonism. And their natural goodness shows itself that they attract us; pleasures attract us without anyone telling us so. So they attract us by nature. But to repeat, the question seems to be: With what right do we assume that nature is good? And modern thinkers began to doubt more and more. For example, Hobbes said the state of nature is bad, whereas prior to Hobbes everyone would have said the state of nature is as such a good state. Rousseau said man is by nature a stupid animal, i.e., man is by nature subhuman. Nature does not supply us with any standards, so it is absurd for us to wish to live according to nature. The conclusion was drawn by Kant—Kant, remember, not Nietzsche: Kant distinguished, called the moral laws the laws of freedom in contradistinction to any laws of nature. Morality is not obedience to a natural or a moral law not originating in man; morality is *self*-legislation. It originates in man's will, in man's rational will alone. It is an imperative originating entirely in man himself. Only through self-legislation does man become truly man; only through self-legislation does man acquire an access to the thing in itself, to the absolute.

Now, what then does profundity mean on the basis of this tradition? That which is based on self-legislation, on—now I use a post-Nietzchean term, but generated indirectly by Nietzsche—decision, commitment. Now decision does not mean here what Herbert Simon[iv] understands by a decision, I don't have to tell you, because according to this view we make decisions every moment. You know the decision, if the secretary takes down a dictation instead of spitting into her superior's face, that's it, or if to spit in her superior's face—these are all decisions, where decision means of course something radically different. This is, you can say, one of the crucial premises of Nietzsche, but the difference between Nietzsche and Kant is this: for Kant there is only one kind of commitment or decision—I mean, the moral law is for Kant universally valid! By giving a law to myself, I give the same law to everyone else; and everyone else who gives the law to himself gives the same law. For Nietzsche, there is necessarily a variety of such commitments or decisions, and this means that all profound thought, all thought based on a decision or a commitment, on self-legislation is particular, cannot be universal.

Let me restate this point. Originally knowledge means perceiving a given order, seeing with the mind or the body's eyes what is, and this perception of what is is the base for any ought, because the is is of such a character that it points to ought. Via pleasure-pain, we seek pleasure. This is a fact, and this shows us what is good for us. Or we speak of natural inclination, of a natural constitution of man, for example, to which there belong natural inclinations which point us toward our completion, toward our ends. Then it was questioned whether there is a given order, whether knowledge perceives what is and does not rather impose an order on something primarily not ordered. What is given are mere chaotic sense data, as we still hear today in some quarters. On this basis the oughts originate in sovereign self-legislation and cannot be derivative from any is.

Now Nietzsche can be said to say this: knowledge means imposing an order, i.e., deciding what the order should be. There is not *the* truth which one can grasp as preexisting knowledge. And when Nietzsche speaks of interpretation, he means at once imposing an order and deciding what that order should be. The difficulty can be stated as follows. Nietzsche says then in the end

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[iv] Herbert Simon (1916-2001), American political scientist and Nobel Prize-winning economist. Author of *Administrative Behavior: A Study of Decision-Making Process in Administrative Organization* (1947).

knowledge is interpretation in the sense indicated. But is this also interpretation, or is this the grasp of what knowledge *is*? I mean, knowledge is interpretation. Is this, that knowledge is interpretation, due to Nietzsche's interpretation, or is knowledge in itself interpretation? This is, simply stated, the difficulty. We must see later on whether that remains true at the end.

I add one more point. Nietzsche's thoughts are all concerned with the future of Europe, as we have seen from the preface and as we can also see from number 20 of the first chapter. The philosophy of the future is concerned with the future of Europe. His philosophy is essentially futuristic. Now I don't use this in the sense in which a certain painting school is called;[v] it is essentially related to the future. This has a long prehistory, of which I mention only one point. In his criticism of Hegel, Marx has said that in Hegel, philosophy comes *post festum*—after the festival, after everything is over and settled. And this was based on a statement of Hegel himself in his preface to *The Philosophy of Right*, when he says philosophy comes—the owl of Minerva rises in the dusk, when a culture, as people say today, is finished, completed, and then it understands this culture. It does not create this culture; it does not found it, but it understands it after it has been completed. And Marx, opposing Hegel, says: No, we need another kind of thinking, not a thinking which *follows* production, action, but a thinking which can guide action. One can say that Marx demanded that philosophy be replaced by action, surely; but this action needs a theory. Philosophy is replaced by revolutionary theory, which is no longer philosophy. The alternative—and this is the alternative which Nietzsche chooses—we cannot abandon philosophy but philosophy must itself become history-making, preparing the future, thinking about historical decisions.

So Nietzsche's philosophy, based on a decision, is meant to elicit decisions, and that is essential to its cognitive character. There is no purely theoretical doctrine antedating his decision, according to his interpretation. This much I would like to say in advance so that you see it has something to do with our issues. I mean, the things discussed in the methodology of the social sciences are all fundamentally present in Nietzsche's mind, of course, and many other things too. I mean the issue is one with which I think everyone a bit informed about present-day even social science thought is familiar.

Now before I turn to a discussion of the first chapter of [blank space], I would like to find out whether I have made myself reasonably clear. By the way, pragmatism, which has of course very much in common with Nietzsche, probably was independent of Nietzsche. I simply do not know pragmatism that well. But it surely . . . pragmatism in a more limited way denies that knowledge is essentially cognitive.[vi]

Then we turn to the chapter. The book is devoted to the philosophy of the future, which as such is opposed to the philosophy hitherto; and that means especially to dogmatism. The term dogmatism is well known, of course, to classical antiquity but it has taken on a more specific character through Kant. Kant says the prejudice that one can progress in metaphysics without previous examination of the cognitive faculty, that is dogmatism, just as it is to go into a being,

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[v] Futurism was an art movement initiated in 1909 by Italian poet Filippo Tommaso Meninetti, who published "Manifesto of Futurism" on the front page of *Le Figaro*. Futurism, which was primarily an Italian art movement, denounced the past and celebrated the modern world of industry and technology.
[vi] The transcriber notes: "From this point on, the recording becomes defective."

the highest being or whatever else it may be, without previously having [blank space] examined whether our cognitive faculty is capable to study these things, this is dogmatism. And dogmatism in Kant is seen as the opposite of empiricism. But both dogmatism and empiricism are opposed to criticism of reason, to what Kant understands by philosophy. That is to say empiricism too is dogmatic, although in a different sense. Nietzsche says dogmatism is based on prejudice. It claims to possess *the* truth and therefore it can find its expression in a complete philosophic system. The greatest example is [blank space] and Nietzsche says by the form of his book that it has nothing to do whatever with any dogmatic philosophy, by writing in these brief aphorisms. The meaning is [that] these are occasional observations. Occasional observations: he looks at this phenomenon, and he sees this; on another occasion, in another illumination, it appears differently. [Blank space] And he is not concerned with contradiction among [blank space]. It is the most sincere form of knowledge according to him. But at the same time that is only the beginning, because these aphorisms are written with extreme care. At the end of the chapter of the *Genealogy of Morals*, we find a very revealing remark about the care with which Nietzsche [blank space]. So we cannot take these as mere passing notes; there is much more than that.

The first aphorism begins with the most obvious prejudice of the philosophers, namely, that philosophy is good: philosophy means to strive for truth. Philosophy therefore is truthfulness, veracity of the highest order. And this is obviously a virtue, a moral virtue, veracity. [Blank space] moral virtue is a kind of will involved, moral virtue being a habit of choosing; and that will is called by Nietzsche the will to truth. If we look at that will to truth, which is in a way the basic premise of philosophy, of all previous philosophies, this will to truth leads to all kinds of strange questions, and eventually to the question regarding the will to truth itself: *Where is that will*? In us? Are we truthful? The soul longs for truth, as all philosophers have said. But Nietzsche says: The soul also longs for delusion—there is plenty of evidence for that. Then the will to truth must be somehow above us, like law, outside of us. The will to truth questions us although [blank space]. Should we then not rather speak of a "he," speak of truth as a he, a person, and not of an it? We don't know. But is not "he" ultimately God? But it must be *in* us although it is not we ourselves, because we ourselves are not simply truthful. Nietzsche criticizes the love of truth, as it was indicated in the preface where he compares it to a woman—that passage which, I am sorry to say in these enlightened ages, was meant to be a depreciation of truth. Nietzsche applies the love of truth *to* the love of truth. Why does he not simply turn his back on love of truth, as most people do? I mean, not in the sense of ordinary veracity, which is rather common, but in that more radical sense in which the philosophers claim to love the truth. Why does he not do that? Because he does not know whether the love of truth is simply bad or foolish; maybe it *is* good. The position he takes depends on what proves to be *true* regarding the will to truth. One must raise the question how to look—the old Socratic question—and one must try to find the true answer.

Differently stated, Nietzsche applies love of truth to love of truth because he is concerned with the future of Europe. The future of Europe is threatened by the fact that the best Europeans believe in truth. But why is he concerned with the future of Europe? Why does he not say, *après nous le déluge*—"after us, the deluge"? And the second question: if he would really arrive at the conclusion [that] the love of truth is bad, it would of course be a true statement, it would be meant to be a true statement. So he is concerned with the truth, let us not forget this for a single moment. The highest concern, the concern with the future of Europe, demands knowledge of

truth. But to be capable of a high concern means to be highly intelligent, or to understand matters of great importance. But to understand such matters means, of course, to know the *truth* regarding these matters. All these things are true, and Nietzsche doesn't deny them, but for some reason they do not satisfy him. Why?

Nietzzsche asks for the cause of the will to truth, what is the why to the will to truth, but he also speaks of the more fundamental question, namely, what is the value of the will to truth? Why truth? The causal question does not decide the value question. This is today trivial, where everyone has heard of the genetic fallacy. But why is the value question the more fundamental question—which no social scientist would admit, because he would say the most fundamental question is of course the factual, the causal question. Truth, it also appears here, is somehow arrived at by studying some problem. Truth is the solution of problems, you can say. This problem here regarding the will to truth does not depend on our will. It comes out by itself and hence it does not depend on our will to truth, in particular [blank space]. It is a Sphinx, and we are the Oedipus, the problem-solver. *Or*, *we* present ourselves to the Sphinx, and then the Sphinx is the problem; we present ourselves and then the problem is the problem-solver. But if we present ourselves to it, surely this depends on our will: we may or may not present ourselves to it. We are the will to truth; we are the problem. If you have understood this you have already solved the problem. This is the first indication that philosophy is psychology, in Nietzsche's sense of the word psychology. If we are the will to truth, and the study of such beings as we [are] is psychology, we must be psychologists. The problem does not depend on our will; it arises by itself. But from what? From within us. We have no choice but to face it. "We" already means Nietzsche, not these other philosophers. Why does it arise in Nietzsche? Why is the will to truth applied to the will to truth first by Nietzsche? Now this very question presupposes that the will to truth existed before Nietzsche. The will to truth arises therefore of course not for the first time in Nietzsche. The question is, then: Why does the will to truth arise in men? This is a question of the cause of the will to truth and not the question of the value of the will to truth.

We turn now to the second aphorism. Here he begins with the causal question. In other words, we have to find out why is the value question more fundamental than the causal question. The causal question, Nietzsche asserts now, is based on an answer to the value question. For this reason the value question is primary. Why is this so? We wish to explain the will to truth. We must surely first understand the thing to be explained. We must identify it. Now we say that the will to truth as we know it is the opposite to the will to delusion, and the will to truth is high or valuable, and the will to delusion is low or valueless. We say the will to truth and the will to delusion are essentially different. If they are essentially, radically different they must have different causes. So the question, our decision regarding the value, determines and precedes the causal question. Our present-day psychologists are deceived about it because they don't believe that they have already made a decision regarding the value question. They would probably say the will to truth is not superior in value to the will to delusion, and on the basis of this answer to the value question they believe that the causal question is the only thing. But the premise is then this: truth is good; delusion is bad. But is this premise self-evident? Is life possible without delusion? Is delusion perhaps even of higher value for life than truth? Well in your own experience, see on how many occasions it was good that you did not know a certain terrible truth, because you could not be happy if you did.

Now Nietzsche does not answer these questions. He only raises questions. His refutation of previous philosophies consists in the fact that previous philosophers did not raise these necessary questions, and yet answered them. They dogmatically presupposed answers. This of course is also a slight overstatement because we remember where Plato spoke of a noble and salutary lie, so I mean it was not so unqualifiedly asserted at Nietzsche presents it here. But of course from Plato's point of view the question was this, granted that there are delusions and lies which are salutary, we would have to raise the question: Not all delusions are salutary; which delusions are salutary and which are not? Which delusions are truly salutary [inaudible phrase].

Now we turn to the next aphorism. The philosophers have not raised this fundamental question regarding the goodness of philosophy, i.e., the goodness of truth in opposition to untruth. They have not thought about it, but nevertheless they have not acted arbitrarily. They acted, Nietzsche says, instinctively; they acted instinctively. Their judgment, [that] truth is superior to untruth, is not an arbitrary judgment but an instinctive judgment.[vii]

Nietzsche says almost all thought is instinctive. He compares the course of truth to the act of birth, as compared with heredity, that which has been transmitted. Philosophy consists of inherited acts. The prejudices of the philosopher in favor of truth are far from arbitrary: they are instinctive; they are a requirement of life itself. But that does not mean that it is *true*. Nietzsche says [?] the love of truth could more modestly be called the love of clarity, anti-confusion. It is the search for clear contours, for definiteness; and that the word "definite" plays such a great role is not unrelated. But perhaps reality lacks these things; in that case the concern with the clear contours would lead to the falsification of reality, which is, however, useful. And therefore the interest of life and the interest of truth would conflict. This implies that reality is in truth not contoured and that previous philosophers were in fact seeking untruth.

Nietzsche is seeking the truth; he does not know it. But he has the suspicion that the truth lacks these contours, that the truth cannot be as rational or scientific—in the wide sense—as philosophers have thought.[viii]

[A line across the page here seems to indicate that transcript resumes from the tape]

Nevertheless, though . . . he is concerned with the truth, with the true character of reality; he speaks of the superiority of appearance or delusion to truth. Why does he do that? Does he only want to shock us? That there is a certain willingness to shock us present cannot be denied, but this would not be sufficient.

Now let us turn to the next aphorism, aphorism 4. Here he approaches for the first time the assertoric—I mean, not only it may be so, but that he asserts something. He says we are *inclined* to assert—he does not actually assert yet, but "we are inclined to assert"—the so-called truth is better than its opposite. The so-called truth. The so-called truth: he means by that the synthetic judgments a priori. Do you know what that is? *You* know what it is. Well, the Kantian term for the fundamental concepts used in understanding. For example, the principle of causality belongs

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[vii] The tape was changed at this point. The transcriber notes that "several minutes of discussion were not recorded. The section following has been taken from class notes."

[viii] The section taken from class notes ends here and the transcript is based on the audio file.

to these synthetic judgments a priori. I cannot now go into why Kant called it by this quaint name; that I cannot go into. So these fundamental premises of all thought—causality, but also the principle of contradiction, of course—are better than their opposites. We could not live without them. I mean, if we did not think in causal terms, we could not live. But that does not yet mean that this, thinking in causal terms, avoiding contradictions and so on, is *true*. The good, good for man, is not the same as true. And in this sense, Nietzsche says, by making this distinction we are already going beyond good and evil. Why? Why does he go beyond good and evil? I mean, without knowing anything else of Nietzsche and Nietzsche's terms, one could say . . . he makes the distinction between . . . the good and true are opposites. The good and true are opposites: why does he go beyond good and evil in making this observation? I mean, on the face of it, without going into any deeper question, I would say only if he takes the side of truth. And to some extent this is in fact true. Life needs untruth; and untruth means here something like logic—Aristotelian logic or Kantian logic doesn't make any difference here. Untruth in the sense of logic is good. Illogicality is bad, for life, but true. If we would see reality as it is, we could not live. But reality *is* in itself of such a character. Nietzsche ends this aphorism with the remark, logic in this sense indicated—I mean, all the principles, say, of both Aristotelian and Kantian logic—would be true if man were the measure. If man were the measure, if man were the microcosm, then logic would be true; then the three-dimensionality of space would be . . . the three-dimensional space would be *the* space. Because man is *not* the measure, illogical reality, a reality not tailored to man, is true. But Nietzsche also calls this truth, the illogical reality, delusion and appearance. This is the difficulty. Should—I mean a question—could it be true that in the end man *is* the measure according to Nietzsche despite . . . He doesn't deny that man is the measure, as you see, there are some points . . .

Where did you recognize in my previous exposé the assertion that man is the measure? Well, if the true world, if it is denied that there is a true world different from the world of appearance, and there is only one world, this world originating in man, then man is of course the measure. So what Nietzsche is driving at in a very roundabout way is to assert that man is the measure, but differently than he understood. Man is not the measure in that way that his ordinary way of understanding is *the* understanding of reality as it is.

Aphorism 5 is the first assertoric aphorism. The philosophers are not merely naïve but dishonest. They are naïve, we have seen up to now, because hitherto we have not yet had any philosophic prejudices but only common human prejudices *shared* by the philosophers. Now the philosophers, they are naïve, but they are dishonest. They do not apply their will to truth to *their* will to truth. They do not examine their will to truth. They claim to be objective and detached; in fact, they are driven by their wishes, and somehow they know it. That makes them dishonest. Here he begins to speak of individual philosophers, using proper names. He speaks of Kant and Spinoza, but it appears that . . . here Spinoza appears to be worse than Kant, because Kant at least pretends to lead us to his categorical imperative, but Spinoza does not even make the attempt to lead. Everyone who has looked at the first page of the *Ethics* knows that. Definitions set down; we are not led to them; and once you grant the definitions, you have granted everything in the book. This suddenness, that is very dishonest of him. Spinoza conceals entirely his true starting point, and he lays himself justly open to psychological explanation along these lines.

We turn to aphorism 6 now. So we have here, by the way, a principle of the order. The first four aphorisms deal with the prejudices common to all philosophers, in a way common to all men. And from 5 on, we speak of the philosophers as individual philosophers. Aphorism 6: every great philosophy—there is a variety of philosophies—each philosophy has its *own* roots. So we have not understood an individual philosophy by knowing that the philosophers share popular prejudices. Apart from the common root which they all have, the common root being the belief in the synthetic judgments a priori—that doesn't mean they are Kantian, of course not, but they believe in these principles of causality, principle of contradiction and so on and so on. Every great philosophy hitherto[ix] was the self-revelation of its author. This view is now so popular I believe, I think that there must be *n* textbooks in which some psychological if not psychoanalytical explanation of why Leibniz believed in monads and Aristotle in the eternity of the visible universe, and so on is given. It is the self-revelation of its author, of an intention, of an urge—I don't know whether that's the proper translation of the German word *Treib*; what do you think, Mr. [. . .]?

Student: Drive.

LS: Drive; thank you very much—of a drive, of an interest; and more precisely, since there is a variety of drives in every man, of the order of rank of drives in him. *This*, and not his rational thought, the thought which he presents, is the substance of his thinking.

Now in the meantime, I believe that has become so elementary, that these are only rationalizations, that's the most simple and simple-minded conclusion you can draw from that, but it's also implied. The great philosophers reveal themselves in their philosophy *against their will*. Spinoza didn't wish to tell you that he was suffering from TB when he wrote his *Ethics*, but according to Nietzsche he reveals himself as a man suffering from TB by the *Ethics*. What they reveal of themselves is however truer than what they teach—again, everyone who has ever heard of psychoanalysis knows this. The philosophers of the future will also reveal themselves, but knowingly. For this reason what they teach will be true. This is part of Nietzsche's criticism of the Platonic notion, mentioned in the preface, that there is such a thing as the pure mind. And we can state it simply as follows. If there is *the* pure mind, perceiving *the* truth, there could be only one philosophy; but there is a variety of philosophers and philosophies, and this shows that there is no pure mind. If you take the Hegelian view—Hegel, who in a way admitted also the pure mind, but Hegel also spoke of the pure mind as developing, and at least before it has reached its fullness it was not the pure mind. So a pure mind which develops is not the pure mind of Plato. But secondly, the question is whether this Hegelian way of understanding the variety of philosophers as a *rational* variety is feasible. And Nietzsche denies that. It is not a kind of inner necessity of the problem which leads, say, from Descartes to Spinoza or to Leibniz, but the person, the individual and his emotional life, is decisive. And therefore it cannot be the pure mind.

In the next aphorism—we must now proceed a bit faster—he speaks of two ancient philosophers, Plato and Epicurus, *the* classical antagonists, at least according to Kant, who presents Plato and Epicurus as *the* two opponents, and just as one can say in a way Spinoza and Kant were

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[ix] The transcriber notes that the tape might have slipped at this point.

sometimes seen as *the* modern antagonists. Epicurus spoke of the insincerity of Plato according to Nietzsche's interpretation. Epicurus was sincere, but he was not an actor. Plato was an actor; Epicurus was sincere. But Nietzsche doesn't regard this as such a great superiority. Epicurus was sincere because he was incapable to act. So that is not a particular merit. The insincerity is not the decisive point. The decisive point is rather the naivité, and of this he speaks in this simple aphorism 8, where he quotes two Latin verses from a medieval mystery play. Will you read that? Miss Hill, you have it in front of you.

Student: "There is a point . . . *Adventavit asinus, Pulcher et fortissimus*."[x]

LS: And, simple to translate—

Student: "Enters now the ass, Beautiful and most strong."

LS: Yes, "beautiful," "beautiful donkey, and very strong." This is the item at the root of every philosophy: a very strong conviction. But an ass has for Nietzsche also a different meaning, because the ass . . . you know, the sound which it gives can, in the German rendering of the sound be easily presented as ee-aa: *ja*, yes. So therefore Nietzsche used it in *Zarathustra*, for example. So it is the yes-saying being, and every philosopher says yes to something, but on no good, no rational ground. He makes assertions; and these assertions are unfounded. But without such unfounded assertion, life is not possible, he says; and thinking is not possible, science is not possible.

I turn to the next aphorism: philosophy is the quest for truth in order to live according to the truth. That was the traditional reasoning. The truth means here nature, to live according to nature. And Nietzsche takes the Stoics as *the* classics of the view that life is life according to nature. And Nietzsche says: That's absurd, because nature is indifference itself. Nature does not give us any guidance whatever; it is sheer chaos. And therefore it's absurd. But he says we come back to this notion later, because Nietzsche cannot leave it at that. But nature thus understood, as Nietzsche makes clear—in other words, that is only one understanding of nature—is not the same as life. Maybe the Stoics meant live according to life. But then Nietzsche says: How can you live *but* according to life? Whether that is convincing and sufficient I do not enter [into] now. But life can be as little as nature the basis of morality, as the Stoics believed.

We must dwell on this a bit more. The Stoics are, in a way—the Stoicism is in a way the most revealing philosophy for Nietzsche in this context. They demand to live according to nature. And Nietzsche says this *presupposes*, without their knowing it, that nature is understood according to the Stoa: *kata ten Stoa*. So the Stoics projected themselves into nature, and then they could discover in nature Stoic morality. And now Nietzsche generalizes from that. What is true of Stoicism is true of all philosophy: each philosophy creates a world in its image. *Each* philosophy, hence also the philosophy of the future; but only the philosophy of the future *knows* it, knows what it is doing. And then the general definition of philosophy: philosophy is the most spiritual or intellectual will to power. The key word, will to power, comes out here for the first time. And philosophy is this in the past as well as in the future. The philosopher *is* the measure

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[x] 388.

of all things, necessarily. Philosophy is therefore the opposite of knowing what is; philosophy is much more akin to poetry, to art, creation, delusion. Philosophy is the creation of delusion; but in the philosophy of the future it will be a conscious creation of delusion.

Now what that means is absolutely dark for the time being. Nietzsche implies there is a low-class creativity which belongs to every man, to the human species, and this low-class creativity shows itself in logic, in the synthetic judgments a priori. Every human being, by virtue of being a human being, cannot help looking at things in these categories. But every great philosophy goes much beyond this. The philosophers are *individual* creators and not merely species members. Yet there is a justification of the Stoa. Is the Stoic philosopher not himself a natural being? Philosophy is will to power. But life, nature, *is* will to power. In philosophy, in these creations, nature itself speaks. That is the other side of the picture. However this may be, whether we put the emphasis that in philosophy nature itself speaks, or on the delusion character of philosophy, under no circumstances does philosophy comprehend nature. This theoretical, contemplative view of knowledge is out. And in this respect, Nietzsche . . . that was surely Nietzsche's intention; whether he succeeded in throwing out the old theoretical-contemplative view of philosophy, that is of course a great question. Here we have—let us look at that, at the end of aphorism 10, if you compare that with the beginning of aphorism 6. Let us first read the very beginning of aphorism 6.

Student: "It has gradually become clear . . . philosophy up to now has consisted—"[xi]

LS: "Hitherto"; here he speaks only of philosophy hitherto. Now let us read the end of aphorism 9: "philosophy is this tyrannical drive itself, the most spiritual will to Power, to the 'creation of the world,' to the causa prima." So in the first case he had spoken only of earlier philosophy. Now he speaks of *all* philosophy. Philosophy is the most spiritual will to power. This is *true*; that is not a delusion or an appearance. What is delusion or appearance is that any philosophy ever revealed a truth, a truth independent of it, or that it is rooted in a pure will to truth. Yet we must ask: Does not Nietzsche's doctrine also . . . is Nietzsche's doctrine also not a doctrine which reveals and does not merely tyrannize? Is it due to a tyrannical act of Nietzsche that philosophy is the will to power, or is not philosophy in *itself* a tyrannical act? Only if Nietzsche's doctrine also tyrannizes would it be true that we can never leave the world of appearance or delusion, or that man is the measure of all things. However this may be, Nietzsche has just asserted a truth like the truth which all philosophers previously have asserted, a truth opposed to appearance or delusion. Nietzsche pierces through the delusions of all philosophers and discovers there a non-delusion: the will to power.

Now this aphorism 9 concludes the discussion of individual philosophers of the past, the great philosophers. Now he continues to speak of philosophers, but not of great philosophers [but] of his contemporaries. Aphorism 10. And this was the time in which the question of the true and apparent world was in the center of discussion. What came to be called epistemology, or what was already called in Nietzsche's time epistemology, allegedly dominated by the will to truth, in fact by the will to certainty or by a Puritan conscience—meaning by extratheoretical motivation, surely not the pure mind. And there is a certain sympathy, a limited sympathy of Nietzsche with

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[xi] 386.

these people, or with a certain brand of these people. We cannot go into that. One would have to read the literature, especially the German literature of the 1870s and ’80s to identify these things. I haven’t done it, and I have not the time to do it. This contemporary discussion is, however, connected with Kant, and therefore Nietzsche turns in aphorism 11 to Kant and German idealism. They are the model for the reactionaries contemporary with Nietzsche. This was an anti-sensualist movement—an anti-sensualist, and this is of some importance for the sequel.

Here Nietzsche concludes the discussion of philosophy and turns in aphorism 12 to physics. So you know, according to a very popular view at that time, and still more popular today—well, psychology is nonsense anyway, but the real thing is science, and science of course is primarily physics. And the characteristic of physics is the destruction of sensual certainty, the trust in the senses, but not for the sake of spiritual certainty, that is not the intention of modern physics, for the sake of certainty regarding the soul. And here Nietzsche uses this occasion to develop a new view of the soul, a new hypothesis of the soul, the elements of the new psychology, the psychology of the future.

I think we should now . . . If someone would like to leave, which I would perfectly understand, then let him or her do it now, because otherwise it is of no use; and then I will try if possible to finish this discussion. It is not easy.[xii]

—which deals with physics. And the characteristic of physics is the destruction of sensual certainty. But physics does not destroy sensual certainty for the sake of spiritual certainty, of the soul. A radically new view of the soul, a non-spiritualistic view of the soul, is here sketched. This view is presented as a hypothesis. But as a hypothesis it is meant to be validated or invalidated, and therefore Nietzsche next speaks at the end of new inventions which might lead to new findings. Now in German that is a kind of pun—*Erfinden* and *Finden*—and in the Latin it is still clearer. Now this repeats a difficulty we have discussed before: Is philosophy imposing an order—tyrannizing, as Nietzsche calls it—or revealing an order in [unfinished sentence]. Is philosophy creative, in the strict sense, or contemplative?

From physics Nietzsche turns first to physiology, which is in between physics and psychology, in aphorism 13. The new physiology must free itself entirely from teleology. Self-preservation, or to use the nineteenth-century expression, the will to live, is still teleological, Nietzsche asserts, referring to Spinoza, who of course was *the* most famous critic of teleology. No superfluous teleological principles, this is demanded by method, by the principle of economy of principles. You see here how the subjective factor, method, enters in determining the character [short blank space] of the new science.

In aphorism 14 he takes up again physics, and in aphorism 15 again physiology. These two aphorisms repeat aphorism 12 and 13. In aphorism 12 he had spoken of the anti-sensualism of physics: these constructs are all not sensual, feelable [?]. Aphorism 14 speaks however of the *sensualism* of physics. This is of course no simple contradiction. What Nietzche means is that in different ways physics is *both* anti-sensualist and sensual: anti-sensualist in its mathematical character; sensual means in its concern with observation. Physics, too, and that is the key point,

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[xii] The transcriber notes that the tape recorder was turned off for a few minutes.

is an interpretation of the world, one among many, based on an imperative, an ought, not *the* truth. So the criticism of knowledge which Nietzsche affects in chapter one is equally directed against science as against philosophy. Therefore, in order to show that physics is an interpretation, one among many, Nietzsche reflects on the human context of that physics, and he asserts that it has belonged to the plebeian, democratic world, the world of workers—physicists being of course also workers—and contrasts it with the Platonic contempt for this kind of thing. We get a glimpse of course also of the philosophy of the future here. The philosophy of the future must not be plebeian, and in this respect it will be akin to Plato.

Aphorism 15: the fact that we must transcend sensualism does not mean that one is free to rejet sensualism. We must admit the reality of the outer world, including our body. Now this was an issue which was very important in the academic philosophy of the second half of the nineteenth century, where many people believed that so-called solipsism, the consciousness of the individual, with its content, is the only thing knowable with certainty. Some of you may have read Descartes—that I see this tree, that I see that tree is certain; but that this tree *is*, independently of my seeing, is in itself, this is in no way known. Nietzsche rejects this.

Nietzsche turns now to this kind of "idealism," this modern epistemological idealism in the next aphorism, and analyzes thinking in the first place and then, above all, willing, the point being that will is a more fundamental phenomenon than thinking. In aphorism 17, the first analysis of thinking he refers to the fact that there is a possibility that perhaps we cannot strictly speak: *I* think. For example, something *occurred* to me. Occurred to me. My thought, that occurred to me. But can I say I think it, in the sense I am active, the cause of that thought? Would it be not more precise to say it thinks in me? This is the root of the Freudian conception of the distinction between the id and the ego.

Now let me see. Aphorism 19 is crucial, because it develops Nietzsche's notion of the will—of the will; and for Nietzsche will means always the will to power. And he indicates in this aphorism why this is so. The will is a complex phenomenon containing feelings, thoughts, and an affect, as Nietzsche says. And this affect he calls the affect of commands, commanding. This commanding element in the will—I say to myself: "Do that"—is [what is] meant by freedom of the will. In other words, the traditional notion of the freedom of will is baseless, but this is a phenomenon. Free means here commanding in contradistinction to obeying. There is also something obeying in our will, in us. Will is self-commanding—self-commanding, commanding something in us—therefore willing must be viewed from a moral point of view, Nietzsche says. But what does moral mean here? Life presupposes, Nietzsche says—and this echoes certain Aristotelian assertions—like presupposes a ruling and a ruled element in a living being. Ruling and ruled; superior and inferior; high and low. This is what Nietzsche means there by "moral": a distinction between high and low. Life cannot be understood without reference to "values," in present-day language.

Aphorism 20: the soul understood in the light of the will—will is the fundamental phenomenon—is not [blank space] has depth; it is not two-dimensional; still less a *tabula rasa*, an empty blackboard, so that all ideas are acquired by the individual, as Locke said, who is mentioned here. The soul is never empty, not even of the newborn child. Nietzsche proves this as follows. The philosophic doctrine, and if we observe them, the differences of communities and

so, we are eventually driven back to the phenomenon of language, Nietzsche says. Language, the grammar. But ever language embodies old experiences of the race. Nietzsche refers here to the difference between the Indo-Germanic [blank space] race. So there are fundamental experiences, not of the human race in general, but of specific races, which determine also philosophic [blank space].

Now the question arises, and that was somehow discussed by Mr. Butterworth: Will this not be true of Nietzsche's philosophy as well, that it is in a very radical way an Indo-Germanic philosophy? But I would say: In a way, certainly. Does he not proclaim that his philosophy belongs to Europe, and even to a certain state of Europe? So the question is, of course, to what extent does this affect its truth? And it would depend on the character of Europeanism as Nietzsche understood it to say whether the Europeans are in a particular . . . are, as it were, privileged here. Needless to say, Europe means also the United States, although Nietzsche spoke of Europe because the United States was at that time not in the fore.

The next aphorism. There is no free will in the traditional sense, but also no unfree will; I mean, no determinism, because all determinism rests on the principle of causality as understood in modern times, and this principle of causality is one of the basic fictions of these synthetic judgments a priori. Instead, Nietzsche says, in *real life* we do not find free or unfree will in the sense of the metaphysics or physics, but a strong and weak will. Now this needs some . . . what does he mean by real life? We all understand that of course in a way, but we must reflect on it a moment. All previous philosophies claim to reveal reality. In fact they only interpreted reality; they created a reality which they claimed to have discovered. The philosophers of the future who will interpret reality *know* what they are doing. Yet after some hesitation, Nietzsche eventually in number 19 asserts that he has *discovered* the will to power. This progress of assertions is important: first questioning, perhaps and so on; and gradually in aphorism 19 he asserts that he has discovered the will to power, that the will to power is a fact, not an interpretation. Now, why is this so? Is this the consequence of his having taken his stand within "real life," whereas traditional philosophy transcended and disregarded "real life"? Truth reveals itself only within real life, not if we stand outside of it. We must see whether this leads deeper into Nietzsche.

The next, number 22. We have read the end of this aphorism. Interpretations: interpretations are even preferable to the facts. The facts say nothing. Now Nietzsche has sketched here in the course of some of these aphorisms a new psychology which centers around the will to power. Now he turns to a critique of the whole old psychology in the last aphorism. This transmoral psychology—moral now understood in the ordinary sense of morality—is to be the mistress of the sciences. The new psychology is the new philosophy. And the very name psychology indicates it is a science. So in spite of all the questionings of science, objective knowledge, Nietzsche *seems* to return to a science in the form of objective knowledge. He says psychology will become *again* the mistress of the sciences. That means it is not now the mistress of the sciences, but it was the mistress of the sciences once. When? Nietzsche must have had some time in mind. Well, my guess is he means Plato. In Plato one can say psychology was, the doctrine of the soul was the true key doctrine, but of course Nietzsche means his psychology in a radically anti-Platonic sense.

We must bring this to an end. We seem to end in a new dogmatic science, dogmatic in the sense of a science which teaches *the* truth, not necessarily in the sense which teachers on the basis of unexamined premises. The difference seems to be a much greater caution. Nietzsche presents a hypothesis to be tested, at first glance. But he does not leave it at speaking of a hypothesis. He relapses into assertions. The will to power resembles the thing in itself. The will to power is at is were Nietzsche's thing in itself. But this is surely wrong, although the impression is perfectly intelligible. Nietzsche finds the will to power in real life. He abolishes the distinction between he true and apparent world. Nietzsche's doctrine of the will to power is a doctrine of a different kind than all earlier doctrines. It is a conscious interpretation, imposition; but it also claims to *reveal* the truth, not to impose on it. The hypothesis is to be tested, an experiment of thought which is to be validated or invalidated by observation. Do we find [that] the will to power everywhere seems the same? Can we reasonably understand every human action as a manifestation of the will to power? But Nietzsche means something different, although primarily he speaks in the language of the science of hypotheses. It is indeed an experiment of thought, but an experiment of thought to be validated or invalidated by human *action*, not by observation. If men will it to be, it will be true. Nietzsche has discovered not a reality, the will to power, but a possibility, a novel possibility, not coeval with man as man. In between these two, a hypothesis or a call to action to be validated or invalidated by action, lies Nietzsche's view. And we have to try, if we can, to find a more precise definition of that.

But one word I would like to say about the will to power, because it will come up again and again, either explicitly or implicitly. Nietzsche does not primarily think of Prussian militarism—Bismarck and that sort of thing—when he speaks of the will to power, although he could not help thinking of power: everyone spoke of power at that time in Germany—power politics. But this is not the primary reason for Nietzsche's will to power. I believe one, the best, simplest approach for an understanding of Nietzsche's doctrine is a famous saying of Kant: "The human understanding prescribes nature its laws." I am quoting from memory; is this correct? The human understanding prescribes nature its laws. The human understanding has not discovered these laws—the fundamental laws, of course, like causality—but it prescribes them. The human understanding *orders* the data of the senses by its own inner power. To understand means to order, to impose an order. This I think is the first premise of Nietzsche, from which his doctrine follows under certain conditions.

There was another motive not peculiar to Nietzsche which must not be forgotten, and that is the thought of progress, which was so powerful in the nineteenth century and in part of the twentieth century. How is progress possible? Why is progress necessary? Could there not be an end to progress? Could there not be an end which can be achieved? For example, if you say the end of progress is universal . . . the greatest happiness of the greatest number, can this not be established? Well, of course you have to do something after you have established it to preserve it, but that's no longer a progress, that's only a preservation. Under what conditions is there a necessity for progress? If knowledge [blank space] is the [blank space] progresses indefinitely, but that we do not know. We do not know. It's plausible. But when is it a necessity? When man, there is something, if man is essentially a being which wishes to transcend every achievement, which wishes to overcome, to overpower every earlier achievement. I mean, that is by no means the root of what Nietzsche says, but these are things which he shared with his age and which throw some light on his doctrine.

Student: [inaudible question]

[end of session]